



United States  
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Agriculture

**Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service**

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## WILDLIFE SERVICES—MAINE

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### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Maine

Every day, visitors, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call on Maine Wildlife Services (WS) for expertise in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. Managed by professional wildlife biologists, WS responds with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

Maine is home to a diverse mix of industrial forest land, scenic coastal areas, and numerous lakes and rivers that attract many urban and suburban residents from other New England States. These visitors often encounter unwanted wildlife at their campsites and summer homes, and request WS' assistance with animals such as bats, beavers, bears, deer, moose, raccoons, and skunks.

### Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. The WS program shares information with people about reducing their risk of

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**Major Assistance Activities:**

- Protecting commercial timberlands, State and municipal roads, and highways from flood damage caused by beavers
- Protecting paper mills and industrial buildings from contamination by pigeon fecal matter

Using electronic fencing to:

- Protect camps and bee hives from bears
- Protect sheep and other livestock from coyotes
- Protect strawberries, vegetables, and commercial truck crops from deer damage

**Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Maine:**

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Reducing blackbird damage to livestock barns and feeding sites
- Managing predators to protect livestock and wildlife
- Controlling wildlife vectors of rabies and bovine tuberculosis
- Protecting timber and forest resources



exposure to wildlife-borne diseases and about minimizing wildlife damage to their homes. In addition, WS rents out equipment to landowners when deer damage crops, moose damage fences, and bears destroy beehives. WS also provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. Under the Cooperative Beaver Management Program, Maine WS provides *direct assistance* at more than 1,000 problem sites each year, saving more than \$800,000 annually in road repairs. To support this and other assistance efforts, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

**Protecting Transportation, Timber and Natural Resources—**

The Maine Cooperative Beaver Management Program provides an alternative for landowners who want to manage beaver damage that results in flooding to timber, roads, bridges, and property. WS has worked with landowners, towns, and State and Federal agencies to develop a cooperative program that provides trained specialists and the appropriate materials to resolve beaver problems. This program has expanded into nine of Maine's 16 counties since it began in Aroostook County in 1994. The program provides the expertise and equipment (water leveler devices, traps, vehicles, and tools), and the landowners contribute funds to cover the labor costs.

**Protecting Air Travel—**Deer, Canada geese, gulls, and other wildlife are a major hazard to aircraft throughout Maine. WS biologists are trained to assess wildlife hazards, provide technical and operational assistance at airports, and teach airport staff to identify birds of concern and respond to wildlife problems.

**Protecting Public Safety**—In fiscal year (FY) 2002, WS assisted several paper mills, a senior citizen housing complex, and a hospital in identifying available options for resolving building damage caused by roosting pigeons. The pigeon droppings damaged roofing and contaminated walkways, machinery, and building floors where employees were working. WS made monthly site visits to provide pigeon removal assistance and aided in the development of a management plan to reduce the pigeon problem by closing off openings that were being used by the birds to enter the buildings.

**Protecting Agricultural Crops**—Nearly 90 cooperators participated in the Maine Electric Fencing Rental Program during FY 2002. The program provides commercial producers, hobbyists, and home gardeners with an opportunity to own electric fencing after a 5-year lease period. Through the program, producers can effectively protect crops and livestock while spreading their costs over a 5-year period. More than 300 Maine producers have been assisted by this program since 1991.

**Wildlife Diseases**—Maine WS began rabies surveillance work at two locations in Eastern and Northern Maine. One study area is located near Hodgdon in Aroostook County and the second study area is located in Codyville Township in Washington County. At both locations, raccoons were captured by WS and temporarily immobilized so biological samples could be collected for analysis. The animals were then checked for overall health and released at the capture site after the effects of the medication subsided.

In addition, WS began a road-kill collection survey of raccoons and other carnivores. Biological samples from those animals are being submitted to the Maine Department of Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory in Augusta for analysis. All road kill samples submitted to date have tested negative for rabies. WS is also providing assistance to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in their effort to collect and process 500 white-tailed deer for Chronic Wasting Disease analysis.

### Looking to the Future

WS has received numerous requests for assistance from Maine’s aquaculture industry. This industry produces more than \$50 million worth of commercial, pen-raised Atlantic salmon each year. While the pen-raised salmon industry is growing, the number of wild Atlantic salmon is dwindling. As wild salmon populations continue to decrease, some people are concerned that pen-raised salmon could

escape and transfer diseases, such as infectious salmon anemia, further reducing the wild salmon population. Such concerns could lead to restrictions on Maine’s expanding aquaculture industry. Aquaculturists, however, believe rising cormorant populations are the primary cause for the decline of wild Atlantic Salmon. Collecting information about the migration and feeding patterns of cormorants, as well as their roost sizes and overall population numbers, would help determine whether cormorants are having a significant negative impact on wild Atlantic salmon. This valuable information could help support the continuation of an industry that is vital to Washington County’s depressed economy.

On land, WS will continue to play an important role in rabies surveillance. Maine borders the provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec, Canada, where a great deal of concern exists about the spread of rabies from the United States into Canadian Provinces. In addition to providing valuable data for Canada, WS’ surveillance efforts in Maine are part of a larger effort to determine the distribution and status of rabies in the United States.

### Maine Wildlife Services Funding . . . . .

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators; such as producers; private individuals; businesses; and other Federal, State, and local government agencies who have a vested interest in the program. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.

